

Dr. Janine Davidson

November 20, 2016

Metropolitan State University of Denver

Dear Selection Committee,

I learned of your current search for a new president from colleagues who have encouraged me to apply. My policy and academic background, as well as my significant leadership experience, make me an ideal candidate for this position. I see great potential for MSU-D, and would be eager to help it soar.

MSU-D is uniquely positioned, physically and intellectually, in the Denver Metropolitan area to attract top talent in faculty and students – as well as funding from the growing Denver business community and the increasingly successful alumni. The Denver campus provides a great advantage in being close to important government institutions and to a large community of globally-minded business leaders and academics who, as occasional guest speakers and part-time faculty, can greatly enhance the student experience. Likewise, through research and engagement with the community, the school can prepare the next generation of diverse citizens and leaders across disciplines. Its fabulous location also provides an ideal venue for innovative workshops, conferences, and guest speakers, through which the program can enrich its research and teaching, gain more recognition and grow.

Perhaps even more significant, however, is the school's tradition and culture of diversity. Today's economic and political challenges – and indeed the most interesting research questions – are interdisciplinary in nature. The more diverse and interdisciplinary a University is, the more its faculty will be encouraged and supported to explore critical issues in their own research and in the classroom. Students exposed to such creative and interdisciplinary linkages will be more prepared to meet challenges at the local, national, and global levels in both the public or private sectors. Ensuring their success from enrollment to graduation and beyond will be the backbone of the growth MSU-D will enjoy.

By professional background, experience, and disposition, I am especially qualified to provide MSU-D the leadership it needs to grow and achieve this vision. I have taught at the undergraduate and graduate levels and have guest lectured to professionals and senior executives in a variety of venues. I am passionate about teaching and mentoring the next generation; but I also understand that for both faculty and students to thrive, an institution must be well run, attracting diverse talent and resources from a variety of sources. This takes leadership.

I have led at a variety of relevant levels that position me well for this challenge. At the “start-up” level, during the height of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars in 2006, I founded and ran the Consortium for Complex Operations (the “CCO,” now located at the National Defense University), which used a combination of social media and traditional events to link practitioners in both government and non-profit sectors, with academics across disciplines who could help them make sense of their complex environments while also

enhancing their own research agendas. The CCO ultimately launched one of the only peer-reviewed interdisciplinary journals designed to catalyze creative collaboration among academics and practitioners across the fields of development, diplomacy, and defense. Founding the CCO gave me an appreciation for multi-disciplinary efforts and allowed me to exercise my skills as a leader and convener of diverse communities of practice in a “start up” environment. I had to manage myriad stakeholders and funders across a complex bureaucratic and political environment that included academic institutions across the country, as well as the Pentagon, State Department, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the United States Institute of Peace, and importantly, Congress. This complex interagency bureaucratic leadership experience exposed me to challenges I would face – but at a much larger scale – in my current position as the 32nd Under Secretary of the United States Navy.

As the “Under” I am the Navy’s #2 civilian, a political appointment that is considered the “Chief Operating Officer” of the Department of the Navy. This includes both the Navy and the Marine Corps, for which I am responsible for a combined 5-year budget of nearly \$800 billion and the well being of approximately 900,000 military, civilian and family members. While these responsibilities are clearly on a dramatically different scale from a college or university, I see the skill sets as quite complementary. My time spent as a professor of public policy greatly informed my day-to-day work at Navy, from overseeing the Navy’s research and educational agenda at its many laboratories and schools, to catalyzing change across the immense bureaucracy while mentoring many young military officers and civilian professionals. Having now served at the most senior levels of the U.S. government, I am keen to take my leadership skills and passion for education and policy to a University leadership position. I hope you will agree that my qualifications are worth considering for this position. I look forward to discussing the opportunities with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Janine Davidson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Janine Davidson